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The Relationship Between EFL Class Size and Student Achievement in Libyan Schools

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الملخـــــــــص:

أجري تحليل بحثي لدراسة تأثير حجم الفصل الدراسي على نتائج تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية(EFL) ، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على إنتاج المواد الكتابية وقدرات التواصل الشفهي في المؤسسات التعليمية الليبية. استُمدت بيانات البحث من خلال استخدام أساليب المسح إلى جانب تقنيات الملاحظة واختبارات تقييم اللغة المعيارية، وذلك باستخدام منهج كمي. تم استخدام تقنية العينة العشوائية الطبقية للحصول على 170 مشاركًا، شملوا 120 طالبًا و50 معلمًا من مؤسسات تعليمية حضرية وريفية في ليبيا. أظهرت الطرق الإحصائية الوصفية والاستنتاجية أن أداء الطلاب كان أسوأ مع زيادة حجم الفصل، من خلال وجود علاقات سلبية متوسطة في نتائج اختبارات مهارات الكتابة والتحدث. وتبيّن أن النجاح الأكاديمي كان متنبئًا إيجابيًا بمدى تفاعل الطلاب خلال أنشطتهم التعليمية. ساعد تطبيق التعلم القائم على المهام واستخدام موارد الصف في تقليل التأثيرات السلبية الناتجة عن الفصول الكبيرة. تؤكد نتائج البحث على ضرورة القيام بإصلاحات تعليمية تهدف إلى تقليص حجم الفصول لتعزيز مشاركة الطلاب، بالإضافة إلى تزويد المعلمين بالموارد اللازمة لبناء بيئة تعليمية لغوية محسّنة.

الكلمات المفتاحية :حجم الفصل، التحصيل الدراسي، تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، تفاعل الطلاب، استراتيجيات التدريس، ليبيا، الكفاءة الكتابية، الكفاءة الشفوية، الإصلاح التعليمي.

Abstract

A research analysis examined the influence of class size on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning outcomes particularly in written material production and spoken communication capabilities at Libyan educational institutions. The research data came from survey methods combined with observational techniques and standardized language evaluation tests using a quantitative approach. A stratified random sampling technique was used to obtain 170 participants, including 120 students and 50 teachers from urban along rural educational institutions in Libya. The use of descriptive and inferential statistical methods showed that students performed worse when their class sizes increased through moderate negative associations in writing and speaking ability testing results. Academic success was positively predicted by how engaged students were during their learning activities. The implementation of task-based learning and classroom resource utilization helped minimize the negative effects that contribute to large class sizes. Research results underline the necessity of educational reforms that should decrease class size to enhance student involvement as well as supply teachers with the required resources to build an enhanced language learning atmosphere.

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Keywords: Class Size, Student Achievement, EFL Education, Student Engagement, Teaching Strategies, Libya, Writing Proficiency, Speaking Proficiency, Educational Reform.

1. Introduction

Language teaching in the Libyan educational system continues to face multiple obstacles that affect its teaching effectiveness, similar to worldwide educational systems (Ghawail et al., 2021). Educational institutions make EFL instruction a fundamental requirement since it serves vital purposes at both international and domestic levels. English proficiency has become essential for Libyan students because it ensures admission into higher education institutions and employment opportunities together with participation in foreign relations. The success of EFL teaching methods remains crucial for developing Libyan youth who will become part of a modern, interconnected world. The Libyan education system faces a significant challenge in large class sizes since educators identify this as a primary barrier to reaching high academic goals in language education (Tawir & Baharum, 2024).

Research data about class size authority continues to be examined in educational studies because it demonstrates direct effects on student educational achievement. Student achievement in Libyan EFL classes depends on a variety of factors including resource availability as well as teacher training quality alongside educational policy and teaching methods. The relationship between classroom population and student achievement matters specifically for EFL classrooms because language education requires interactive and practice-based activities that become difficult to deliver through overcrowded teaching environments (Douidi, 2021). Large class sizes within Libyan schools create multiple obstacles that affect the standard of EFL teaching while simultaneously making educational system improvement more difficult. The true nature of this relationship becomes visible by analyzing Libyan educational system factors that produce oversized classes while also examining practical teaching methods for English instruction under these conditions (Gherwash, 2024).

2. The Importance of EFL in Libya

English plays a crucial role in Libya’s education and professional sectors, serving as a global communication tool that provides access to international information, academic research, and business opportunities. The Ministry of Education mandates English as a core subject from primary through university levels, highlighting its importance for academic, business, and governance purposes (Gaiser, 2023).

Recent geopolitical and economic changes have increased the demand for English due to Libya’s growing engagement with international partners. Globalization requires students and businesses to be fluent in English for academic exchanges, partnerships, and recruitment, making improvements in EFL instruction vital for Libyan students to succeed (El Mezughi, 2021).

However, Libya faces challenges in teaching English effectively, as the education system relies on traditional methods focusing on grammar and rote memorization instead of communication skills. Overcrowded classrooms also limit students' opportunities to develop practical language abilities.

1.1.2 Challenges of Large Class Sizes in Libyan Schools

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Large class sizes in Libyan schools create significant challenges for EFL educators. Many foreign language classes exceed 30 students, especially in large public schools with limited resources (Hrhor, 2022). These crowded classrooms reduce opportunities for meaningful student-teacher interaction and classroom discussions, which are crucial for language learning. Consequently, students have fewer chances to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing, hindering their fluency development.

Managing large classes also complicates discipline and individual feedback, forcing teachers to rely on traditional lecture and homework methods rather than interactive approaches. This lack of personalized guidance weakens students' understanding and skill acquisition. Teachers face increased pressure to balance curriculum demands, classroom management, and student engagement, making effective EFL instruction more difficult (Ezzreg, 2023).

1.1.3 The Impact of Class Size on Student Achievement

Student achievement in EFL learning directly correlates with class size. Smaller classes lead to better academic results, especially in lessons requiring individualized instruction, benefiting language learning (Albebas, 2023). With fewer students, teachers can customize support and use more interactive learning approaches. Classes with over thirty students tend to show poorer student performance.

Small group learning promotes communication-focused teaching, allowing students to practice speaking and engage in natural language use. Reduced class sizes enable personalized feedback and group work, while larger schools often rely on lectures and rote memorization, which limits skill development, especially in speaking and listening (El Mezughi, 2021).

Strong communicative teaching and assessment skills can improve outcomes even in large classes, but Libyan schools face challenges adopting these methods due to limited resources.

1.1.4 Teaching Strategies and Their Role in Student Achievement

Strategic teaching methods are essential for decreasing the impact of high student numbers on English as a foreign language instruction classrooms. Educators who can apply suitable instructional techniques for their large student body will obtain successful results in student accomplishment. Task-based learning presents itself as an effective technique with students accomplishing authentic language activities that include problem-solving activities along with role-plays and group discussions. The activities help students communicate because language learning needs direct interaction for students to learn better.

The pedagogical practice of task-based learning proves beneficial for EFL classrooms with many students because students learn by using the language in realistic situations to practice various language abilities (Boufarrag, 2021). Educational tasks supported by pair and group activities from teachers enable every student to engage in speaking interactions with others.

Teachers in large classes can successfully implement formative assessments through peer assessment and self-assessment procedures, along with planned quizzes and oral examination sessions. The regular feedback from formative assessments enables students to understand their language development, which becomes essential for their skill advancement. Students can improve their understanding and develop their language competency through peer and self-assessment interventions that let them review both personal progress and group member skill levels (Elmahjoub, 2023).

The implementation of these instructional methods depends on having trained teachers who receive support for their use. In order to achieve high-quality EFL instruction for large classes it is critical to implement professional development for teachers that trains them in effective methods and assessment practices and classroom management approaches. The utilization of

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language laboratories and online platforms, together with supplemental teaching assistants, helps both teachers and students receive improved educational experiences by relieving teacher workload.

1.1.5 The rationale of the Study

The need for this study was based on the growing awareness concerning the significance of EFL in the student's academic, professional, and social advancement in Libya. Due to the advancing liberalization process around the world, the English language become significant, especially in the Libyan students' education process, employment and social purposes. Nevertheless, numerous barriers were reported to hinder EFL instruction in Libya and one of them was Large group size. The purpose of this research was to establish the relationship between the size of the class and the performance of students in EFL classrooms, more so in Libyan schools.

1.1.6 Addressing the Gap in Existing Literature

Despite the fact that this line of research has considerable relevance to numerous education contexts across the globe, the present study seeks to fill the research void on the effects of class size on students' achievement in EFL education in the Libyan context. Although there have been numerous studies conducted on class size effects worldwide, (Elbakay et al., 2024), minimal literature was found that explored the effects of large size class on EFL student performance in Libyan schools. This paper was a perfect opportunity to fill this gap in the literature by looking into how class size impacted not only the student's academic performance but also the teaching strategies, teacher-student relations, and second language acquisition in Libya.

Prior research has mainly focused on Western societies or acquisition in general, leaving out the socio-cultural and educational environment in Libya. This research aimed to fill this gap by offering a comprehensive understanding of the role played by class size for Libyan EFL students concerning their communicative knowledge, active participation, and language skills involving speaking and listening (Amal, 2022).

1.1.7 The Growing Need for English Proficiency in Libya

International demands. English proficiency became essential not only for higher education but also for students' future careers in local and global markets (Elabbar, 2021). Consequently, enhancing EFL education became a national priority. However, major challenges such as large class sizes and limited resources undermined effective English instruction (Ramolobe et al., 2024).

Overcrowding, especially in public schools, resulted from population growth and inadequate educational infrastructure. Large class sizes posed significant obstacles to teaching and learning, particularly in EFL classrooms where communication and interaction are crucial for language acquisition. As Libyan schools emphasize English proficiency, addressing class size is vital since overcrowding directly hinders students' development of effective communication skills (Possú, 2021).

1.1.8 Challenges of Large Class Sizes in Libyan Schools

The Libyan educational system faces significant challenges due to large class sizes, often ranging from 30 to over 40 students (Beh-Afarin et al., 2021). Teachers struggle to manage instruction, classroom discipline, and provide individualized support in such crowded environments. Since language learning requires active practice and immediate feedback, the limited teacher-student interaction in large classes negatively affects the learning process.

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Moreover, large class sizes reduce opportunities for meaningful communication, which is essential for acquiring language skills. Smaller classes allow teachers to implement interactive tasks, encourage group discussions, and offer personalized attention, improving students' language proficiency. However, in overcrowded classrooms, teachers tend to rely on traditional methods like lectures and rote memorization, which fail to engage students and hinder their development of communicative competence, ultimately lowering motivation and language attainment (Boufarrag, 2021).

1.1.9 The Impact of Class Size on Student Achievement

Research has long suggested a link between class size and student performance, favoring smaller classes. Small classes enable teachers to engage more closely with students, monitor progress, and encourage group participation—factors especially important in EFL teaching, where language learning relies on communicative interaction and practical use (Michaelsen et al., 2023).

In contrast, large classes limit individual attention and reduce opportunities for students to practice speaking, listening, and writing in English, leading to weaker language skills, particularly in speaking (Elmahjoub, 2023). These large classes often promote a teacher-centered approach, reducing active learner participation. Despite this, many Libyan schools still face the challenge of large class sizes, highlighting the importance of understanding their impact on EFL learners' achievement (Taha, 2023.

1.1.10 Educational Policy and Systemic Improvements

Due to the broader educational reform movement in Libya, this research found its cause for establishing its objectives. The Libyan governmental institutions have devoted recent years to advancing educational standards by placing specific attention on English language teaching (Tomi, 2023). Large class sizes, together with insufficient resources, remained obstacles that hindered the success of effective EFL instruction. The investigators conducted this research to generate evidence-based guidance for changing teaching approaches while also recommending innovative ways to increase teacher competencies and decrease classroom-student ratios in Libyan education.

Libyan educational reform needed priority status because rapid demographic growth combined with limited resources presented obstacles to fulfilling the education needs of every student. The research investigated the relationship between student achievement and class size, which added insight to the discussions focusing on Libyan educational quality improvement, especially for English as a Foreign Language education. The research results will serve future policymakers who want to enhance teacher support and lower classroom student numbers in order to achieve better learning outcomes for Libyan students.

1.1.11 Practical Significance for EFL Teachers and Educators

This study is also useful in practice for Libyan EFL teachers in terms of promoting a more efficient pedagogy. From the study, the teachers who taught large classes said that large classes negatively affected the extent of their interactions with the students, their capacity to give feedback to every student as well as discipline problems (Ezzreg, 2023). This approach was pursued by establishing how and in what manner class size affected student achievement to assist the teachers in improving their teaching in relation to the students in their classes.

Besides questions on instructional methods that have been applied to large EFL classes, the study proposed task-based instruction, group work, and the use of ICT for communication Medium. These measures assisted in offsetting the difficulties elicited by large group teachings and enhanced the student's interest and mastery of the language. In this way, this study

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provided tools for action that helped teachers increase their practices' effectiveness and, thus, the achievement of students.

1.1.12 Contribution to the International Discourse on Class Size and Learning

This research added knowledge to the ongoing international investigation into the relationship between classroom size and educational results. The global research on class size had deep roots. Still, this study examined this issue uniquely within Libyan schools to investigate its impact on learning English as a foreign language. The study increased the existing research on class size effects in education by studying its impact on English as a Foreign Language learning in a developing nation. These research results were useful to countries dealing with analogous educational obstacles because they added evidence to international discussions about educational best practices.

1.2 Problem Statement

One of the main problems that affected the Libyan education system and hindered it from providing effective English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction was the effect of large class sizes on student achievement. In Libyan schools, and especially in public schools, overcrowded classrooms were a frequent reality, with classes of 30, 40 students or more. In this situation, teachers were not able to monitor and give individual attention to each child in particular, maintain class discipline and apply interactive teaching methods that are necessary for language acquisition. With English proficiency becoming more and more important for academic achievement, future careers, and global communication, EFL teaching has become ever more necessary. These large class sizes, however, often weaken the effectiveness of language instruction by limiting such opportunities for significant communication and practical language use in speaking and listening. On many occasions, these teachers had to resort to the old teacher-centered methods, which restricted student participation and prevented communicative competence. However, this challenge not only caused students' less usage of English but also caused their lower motivation and engagement with their studies, causing insufficient overall academic achievement. Since English has become more and more important in Libya's educational and professional sectors, understanding how the large class size affected the achievement of students in EFL classrooms was crucial to the educational and professional sectors, and to the improvement of EFL instruction.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the effects of large class sizes on the performance of students with regard to EFL learning exigencies in Libya.
2. this research aimed to establish the difficulties that EFL teachers encounter in controlling the large classes in Libyan schools.
3. The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of class size on students' involvement in learning activities in EFL.
4. Thus, the research question can be formulated to fit the context of this study as follows: To what extent Are the current teaching strategies currently implemented for large class group EFL classes in Libya efficient?
5. To give recommendations for enhancing the quality of EFL in large class settings in Libyan schools.

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1.4 Research Questions

1. Does a large number of students in a class have any effect on students' achievement in EFL classrooms in Libya?
2. It will outline the challenges encountered by Libyan EFL teachers when teaching large classes.
3. In what ways does class size influence student engagement in EFL learning activities?
4. In what ways do the current strategies take effect in huge EFL classrooms in Libya?
5. In what way could EFL instruction be improved in large class settings in Libya?

1.5 Significance of the Study

1. This study offers information on the effects of the use of large class sizes on the performance of EFL students in Libya.
2. It reflects on the need and diffusion of large classroom teaching practices to EFL teachers, which serves as a contribution to the teaching professional development needs.
3. The study provides educational policymakers with knowledge of the impact of class size on learning achievement in Libya.
4. That is, it provides specific recommendations regarding what teachers do in classroom EFL teaching for the tutors of huge classrooms.
5. The results can be useful in the improvement of educational development policies towards the delivery and attainment of EFL in the Libyan educational system.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

This study seeks to examine the relationship between large class sizes and student achievement from a conceptual framework that would explain the relationship. It is based on the recognition that the size of the class is a critical element that influences both teaching practices and learning outcomes of learning English language lessons. The following are the variables that are interconnected that are incorporated in the framework:

1. **Independent Variable:** This variable refers to the number of students that there are in an EFL class. This study proposes that large class group size reduces the extent to which teachers can facilitate interactions as well as give feedback and in the process, encourage active participation in the learning of the second language.
2. Techniques used by the EFL teachers help to act as a moderator of the role of class size on the student's performance. Some of the challenges that are likely to come up due to large class sizes can be managed through the adoption of strategies like task-based learning systems, group working and using technology, among others. This has been perceived as an important factor that can be employed by teachers in order to enhance the learning process and reduce the teacher-student ratio in large classes.
3. **Student Engagement (Mediating Variable):** This reflects the extent of students' activity, motivation and interest in EFL learning activities. When the class attendance of students is small, there is increased interaction with fellow students, which helps when learning a foreign language. However, when the learner is involved in large groups, the level of motivation diminishes because of restricted one-to-one or one-to-

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one interaction. This paper aims to find out how engagement moderates the relationship between class size and achievement.

4. **Student Achievement (Dependent Variable):** Student achievement is the variable that this research aims to determine, given that it will be pegged on language proficiency, particularly in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. According to the study, large class sizes are assumed to be disadvantageous in a way that influences the achievement of more crowded classes as compared with less crowded ones; this is due to the limited feedback due to lack of time.

Some of these are as discussed below:

1.6.1 Classroom Variables: This entails the nature of equipment and teaching aids that are available in a classroom, training that has been provided to the educators, and educational policies that govern the classroom etc. The classroom, as a contextual variable, moderates the effect of class size on teaching-learning processes. In this context, three variables may either enhance or worsen the impact of large class sizes on the EFL accomplishment. For instance, a highly qualified teacher may be in a position to control a large class, thus enhancing the learning and teaching process. Conversely, inadequate resources may hamper the ability to address challenges caused by a large class.

1.7 Literature Review

A topic of research in education since the dawn of time is the relationship between class size and student achievement. Within the framework of EFL instruction, a case in point is that in developing countries, such as Libya, class size is an important element in the education outcome. This paper will discuss the challenges of large class sizes in EFL classrooms, something that is common globally but, to the knowledge of the writer, has not been studied in the Libyan context before. The presented review of literature contributes to the synthesis of the available research on the subject of class size's influence on EFL learning, teaching strategies, student engagement and academic achievement. It will review both global perspectives and recent studies of similar socio-economic and educational environments with regard to class size effects.

1.7.1 Theoretical Framework and Background

Numerous studies have consistently shown that students benefit more from smaller teaching groups. Small class sizes enable teachers to deliver more individualized instruction and foster closer teacher-student relationships (Cohen et al., 2003). Teachers can focus more on each student, which enhances learning outcomes, particularly in language classrooms. Smaller groups also make it easier to implement active learning strategies that promote language comprehension (Blaz, 2022). In contrast, large classes reduce student interaction and engagement, which negatively affects learning outcomes.

1.7.2 Global Perspectives on Class Size and Student Achievement

Research from different countries has established a positive correlation between smaller class sizes and student achievement. In the United States, Krueger (1999) found that students in small classes scored higher on standardized tests and demonstrated better academic and social skills. Similarly, studies in the UK and Finland have emphasized the advantages of smaller class sizes, especially in language classrooms (Hattie, 2008). Hattie’s meta-analysis of 800 studies concluded that class size has a significant effect on student achievement, particularly in primary education.

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In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, smaller groups enhance communication-based tasks, which are essential for language acquisition. Tanveer (2017) highlighted that small class sizes allow the use of communicative methods, thereby improving learners' fluency. Similarly, Sparks and Westbrook (2020) reported that smaller EFL classes promote greater student participation and language practice, which are crucial for developing speaking skills.

However, class size is not the only factor influencing learning. Other components, such as teacher quality and access to instructional materials, also affect educational outcomes. Blatchford et al. (2011) argued that with well-trained teachers and appropriate tools, even larger classes can achieve some success. Nevertheless, in larger classes, the limited time and increased demand for classroom control often lead to traditional teaching methods that are less effective for language learning.

1.7.3 Challenges of Large Class Sizes in EFL Classrooms

Large class sizes pose several challenges in language instruction, especially in EFL settings. In Libya, large classrooms prevent teachers from giving personalized feedback, which is vital for language development (El Mezughi, 2021). These environments discourage interactive teaching methods and reduce opportunities for oral language practice. El Mezughi (2021) found that large class sizes at Libyan universities led to limited individual instruction and inadequate development of communicative competence.

Dow Sultan (2024) conducted a study in a Libyan primary school and found that students in larger classes performed worse in speaking and listening tests due to reduced opportunities for language use. This aligns with Ezzreg (2023), who observed that oral participation is diminished in large classes, hindering the development of communicative skills. Since language learning is inherently interactive, the lack of opportunities for practice in large classes severely restricts student progress.

Classroom management also becomes more challenging with larger groups. Managing more than 40 students can lead to high levels of teacher stress, particularly in maintaining discipline and engagement. Boufarrag (2021) noted that EFL teachers in large classrooms often prioritize control over instruction, which compromises meaningful learning experiences.

1.7.4 Student Engagement in Large EFL Classrooms

Student participation is essential in language learning, as interaction is key to language acquisition. Smaller classes promote active learning and provide more speaking opportunities for students (Mundelsee & Jurkowski, 2021). In contrast, students in large classrooms often become passive and disengaged. According to Chen (2024), decreased student participation in large classes leads to lower language achievement.

Elmahjoub (2023) found that in Libyan EFL classrooms, student engagement was negatively affected by the lack of individualized attention. In large classes, teachers struggle to create supportive environments where students feel comfortable making mistakes and participating actively. Without this safe learning environment, students are less likely to develop strong language skills.

Still, some research suggests that student engagement in large classrooms can improve with effective strategies. Juuti et al. (2021) reported that using group work, technology, and pair-based activities increases interaction and motivation among students, even in overcrowded classrooms.

1.7.5 Teaching Strategies in Large EFL Classrooms

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Educators have developed several strategies to increase student participation and achievement in large EFL classrooms. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is one such method that promotes real-world communication. Amroun and Amouchi (2021) demonstrated that TBLT encourages student collaboration and interaction, which is essential in large classes.

The integration of digital tools is another effective strategy. Chang and Lan (2021) showed that technology allows students to practice language skills outside classroom hours through online discussions, language games, and virtual peer interactions. This blended learning model enhances student proficiency even in crowded classrooms.

Formative assessments, such as peer and self-assessment, also help address the challenges of limited feedback in large classes. Homayouni (2022) found that peer assessment improves language proficiency and fosters a collaborative classroom culture, even with large student numbers.

1.7.6 Implications for EFL Education in Libya

International research findings have practical implications for Libya, where large class sizes are a common issue in universities and schools. Large classes hinder active learning, individual feedback, and effective language practice (El Mezughi, 2021; Boufarrag, 2021). Addressing these issues requires systemic changes in classroom size and teaching methodology.

Recent Libyan studies, such as those by Dow Sultan (2024) and Elmahjoub (2023), highlight the need for smaller class sizes combined with student-centered teaching practices. These reforms would foster more effective language learning environments and improve EFL outcomes for Libyan students.

2.1 Research Methodology

In light of this, the study used a quantitative approach to analyze the correlation between the size of the class and the performance of students in EFL classrooms in Libya. The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between class size and students' performances in terms of language skills, speaking, and listening and also determine the difficulties teachers face when handling many students in a class. This paper submits the method of research, population and samples, procedure and technique of data collection, and analysis used in the research below.

2.1.1 Research Design

The correlational research design was used with the aim of comparing the relationship between the independent variable, class size, and the dependent variable, student achievement in EFL classrooms. This design was deemed most suitable as it facilitated the detection of the patterns and associations of the variables without altering them. The research questions of the study sought to establish whether there was a (Statistical) relationship between large class sizes towards learners' achievement in the learning of languages in the Libyan context.

2.1.2 Population and Sample

The research studied English as a foreign language students and their instructors from both public and private schools and universities across Libya. The researcher measured the population of both city and country students by using a stratified random selection procedure. The study team picked 170 individuals consisting of 120 students and 50 teachers. They selected students and teachers equally from urban and rural settings. The research participants consisted of students between 10 and 25 years old and teachers in the age range of 25 to 50 years.

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Our data collection involved picking schools and colleges with big English as a Foreign Language classes since they normally teach groups of 30+ students. The study used students from primary, secondary and university levels to understand class size and student achievement effects at different educational backgrounds.

2.1.3 Table 1: The locale of the Study

Location	Cities Included	Institutions	Focus	Objective
Urban (Major Cities)	Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata, Zawia	Public and private schools, Universities	EFL classrooms in secondary schools and universities	To capture a wide range of class sizes and teaching strategies in urban areas
Rural (Smaller Towns)	Small towns and rural areas across Libya	Public and private schools	EFL classrooms in secondary schools	To capture class sizes and teaching strategies in rural areas

2.1.4 Table 2: Population and Sample

Category	Target Group	Locale	Total Population (Students)	Total Population (Teachers)	Sampling Method	Total Sample Size
Population	Libyan EFL students and teachers from public and private schools and universities	Urban (Major Cities) and Rural (Smaller Towns)	Approximately 5000 students	Approximately 300 teachers	Stratified random sampling	N/A
Sample	A random sample of EFL teachers and students from various schools and universities	Urban (Major Cities) and Rural (Smaller Towns)	120 students (80 from urban areas, 40 from rural areas)	30 teachers (20 from urban areas, 10 from rural areas)	Random selection of participants from selected classrooms	170 participants (120 students and 50 teachers)

2.2 Data Collection Methods

Surveys

We obtained information by giving survey questionnaires to students and teachers. The study used surveys to collect information about several aspects of teaching English as a foreign language.

Teachers furnished data about the typical student count in their English as a Foreign Language classrooms.

The study evaluated students' language skills by examining their results from multiple recent tests of writing, oral skills, reading, and listening. Their performance results came from either official standard language exams or school tests they took.

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Students indicated their participation levels during English as a Foreign Language activities through a ranking system.

2.2.1 Classroom Observations

Teachers observed students in class to get real data about how well students engaged with lessons plus what methods instructors used to teach. Our observation focused on several specific areas, including:

2.2.2 Student Experience of Taking Part in Oral Learning Sessions

The instructor utilized specific teaching approaches to control the student groups.

The teacher used different group and individual tasks as well as technology in classroom practice.

The observations confirmed survey results to let us understand how students learn best in large classes.

Variables

2.2.3 Independent Variable

- **Class Size:** Measured by the number of students in each classroom.

2.2.4 Dependent Variables

- Students achieve language skills through four tests of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
- The study examined student involvement in language courses through student surveys about their participation levels.

2.2.5 Control Variables

- Teachers' methods in large classrooms that combine interactive and communicative ways of teaching formed a control measure because these methods affect student results.
- Teaching years help control this study because teachers who teach longer can handle many students better than new teachers.
- The research controlled resources in language labs as well as multimedia systems and teaching support personnel because they affect how teachers educate large groups.

2.3 Data Analysis Techniques

2.3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Observational analysis of the quantitative data involved the use of descriptive statistics with a view of presenting the characteristics of the sample. The following methods were employed:

- Descriptive statistics in the form of means and standard deviations were computed with a view of establishing the central tendency and dispersion for class sizes, student achievement scores and students' engagement levels.
- Class size frequencies of the selected schools and universities were done by use of frequency distributions.

2.3.2 Inferential Statistics

- In order to further analyze the strength and direction in which the class size affects the student's performance, the study employed the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. This

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statistical test sought to determine the degree of relationship between class size and the scores in the class, as well as the extent of the relationship between class size and students' learning activity level.

- Furthermore, there was a multiple regression analysis showing how much class size affected the students' performance while accounting for the effects of teaching methods, teacher training, and classroom facilities. This possibility of this type of regression model enabled the researcher to determine how paramount class size is towards the achievement of students while controlling other extraneous influences.

2.3.3 Ethical Considerations

- The research team followed ethical rules when working with participants to maintain their rights. Key ethical considerations included:
- Everyone took part in the study after getting complete information about its goals, procedures, and withdrawal rights. Ongoing approval from all participants started with student and teacher signatures before research activities began.
- Participants stayed safe from identification because their details were removed from the data. All research records were kept in secure locations, and names were removed from the analyzed data.
- Participants joined the study of their own choice and could end their participation at any time without facing negative effects.

2.3.4 Limitations of the Study

- The research delivered essential information about class size effects on achievement in EFL classrooms, yet researchers identified multiple constraints in their study.
- The study drew its participants from particular sections of Libya (local and distant areas), thus failing to capture the complete range of EFL teaching classrooms nationwide.
- The findings derived from self-reported data contain potential issues related to social desirability bias and inaccurate memory recall in addition to self-report bias.
- The correlational design of this study prevented researchers from determining if class size directly influences student achievement measures, although it demonstrated significant relationships within the sample. Additional time-based research must explore causality between variables.

2.4 Data Analysis

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Class Size, Student Achievement, and Engagement

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Class Size	35.5	4.8	30	42
Student Achievement (Writing)	75.3	12.4	50	98

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Student Achievement (Speaking)	70.2	13.5	45	95
Student Engagement (Scale 1-5)	3.8	0.9	2	5

This study reflected specific findings on the programs and learnings of classrooms and overall learner behaviors and performances. The number of students per class was taken to get the mean and standard deviations, given by 35.5 and 4.8, respectively, which tended towards 30-42 students per class, touching the characteristics of large classes. Regarding the value, the mean on writing was 75.3, and the standard deviation of 12.4 implied that though students' performance was rather good, there was a moderate range in writing ability. Speaking achievement in this study had a slightly lower mean score of 70.2 with SD = 13.5 and, thus, reveals a greater variability in the student's performance. Last, the level of students' engagement, which was on a 5-point scale, was an average of 3.8 with a standard deviation of 0.9, meaning that most of the students engaged themselves moderately in the classroom. These findings imply that there is a relatively acceptable level of student engagement. However, large class sizes and variations in learner accomplishment would warrant close attention to this area and enhancement.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	Class Size	Student Achievement (Writing)	Student Achievement (Speaking)	Student Engagement
Class Size	1.00	-0.47	-0.52	-0.38
Student Achievement (Writing)	-0.47	1.00	0.85	0.62
Student Achievement (Speaking)	-0.52	0.85	1.00	0.65
Student Engagement	-0.38	0.62	0.65	1.00

Several important relationships between class size, student achievement, and student engagement were observed. A moderate negative correlation was between class size and both writing (-0.47) and speaking (-0.52) achievement, i.e., as class size rose, students' performance with respect to the two achievement areas decreased. Likewise, a moderate coefficient of -0.38 between class size and student engagement indicated that student engagement in classroom activities decreased with an increase in class size. In contrast, there were very positive correlations between student achievement and engagement, with a 0.62 correlation for writing and a 0.65 correlation for speaking. From these findings, it is evident that greater levels of student engagement were strongly linked to better language learning performance, specifically in the areas of writing and speaking, which underscores the important part engagement plays with regard to enhanced language learning outcomes.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis for Student Achievement (Writing and Speaking)

Predictor Variable	B (Writing Achievement)	SE B (Writing)	B (Speaking Achievement)	SE B (Speaking)	Beta (Writing)	Beta (Speaking)	p-Value
Class Size	-1.08	0.42	-1.24	0.44	-0.27	-0.31	0.01

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Student Engagement	3.27	0.68	3.12	0.72	0.45	0.47	0.00
Teacher Experience	2.14	0.92	1.85	0.95	0.19	0.17	0.06
Classroom Resources	2.45	0.76	2.30	0.80	0.22	0.21	0.03

In a sense, the results of a regression analysis provided the following insights into the factors affecting the achievement of students in EFL classrooms. The (Teacher experience) was the only variable that did not significantly have a relationship with the achievement in writing and speaking; this study implied a negative meaningfulness with writing (-1.08, p = 0.01) and speaking achievement (-1.24, p = 0.01); this meant that as the class size increases, there would be a reduction in the performance of writing and speaking. On the other hand, there was a positive relationship between student engagement and achievement in writing and speaking, as a more engaged student yields a higher achievement in language writing and speaking tasks (B = 3.27, p = 0.00 for writing; B = 3.12, p = 0.00 for speaking). Teacher experience had a relatively small but positive influence on the main dependent variables, total student achievement and writing fluency. The effect on writing fluency was non-significant, p = 0.06. Last, classroom resources were revealed to have a significant influence on students' achievement, even though more impact was documented in writing rather than in speaking for all the students; B = 2.45, p = 0.03 for writing and B = 2.30, p = 0.03 for speaking. This means that there is a general agreement that more and better quality and adequate teaching materials supplements can improve student learning especially the writing skills in EFL classrooms.

2.5 Findings of the Study

The research revealed important information about how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student success relates to class size in Libyan teaching settings. My statistical analysis of this data showed important patterns in how class size affects EFL student results and classroom involvement in Libyan educational settings. Below are the key findings:

2.5.1 Impact of Class Size on Student Achievement

The investigation discovered a modest negative relationship between class size growth and student achievement results in writing and speaking examinations. A higher number of students in a classroom resulted in reduced performance levels across writing and speaking assessment tasks. Multiple regression analysis validated the negative statistical relationship between class size and student achievement scores in writing along with speaking abilities. Each additional student in a classroom affected the average achievement score negatively, thus showing that larger class sizes diminish students' performance in language tasks.

2.5.2 Impact of Class Size on Student Engagement

Research results show that smaller classes create more student involvement, but larger classes decrease it. When class size grows, students take part in dialogues and work less effectively to learn the language. Even though many students faced difficulties in large classes, they showed better achievement when they actively took part in the lessons. Engaged EFL students achieved better results in writing as well as speaking assignments because engagement helps their language learning.

2.5.3 Teaching Strategies and Classroom Resources

This area of the study showed that teachers who adopted many elements of interactivity in their large classes were able to minimize the negative impacts of large classes. Nevertheless, while trying to apply the communicative approach, the teachers who worked with large groups of

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students reported several problems associated with giving proper attention and care to each learner. This is due to the shortcomings of the traditional teaching practices that are dominant in most of the learning institutions, such as the use of lectures, which limits the creativity of the students and the overall efficiency of this training. Also, classroom resources like computers, teaching helpers or assistants, and multimedia were other positive determinations that contributed to the student performance, namely in writing as well as speaking abilities. This implies that having improved resources helps in addressing the issue of large student groups and improving students' learning achievements as they get more opportunities to practice the language and exposure to English.

2.5.4 Teacher Experience

Researchers determined that teacher experience boosts student performance a little bit less than other factors such as class size and attention levels. Teacher experience helps students learn better when it comes to writing and speaking skills. Most teachers who had worked longer achieved better results because they understood how to lead students and teach effectively. The benefits of teacher experience were smaller than class size and student engagement effects when it came to impacting student achievement.

2.5.5 Engagement and Achievement

Student engagement strongly improved their results in both writing and speaking, according to this research. Students who took part closely in group activities and language practice showed performance growth both in writing and speaking tasks. EFL students need to participate actively because it shows us how their learning and success improve at once.

2.5.6 Locale Differences

In this research, no difference was established between urban and rural schools concerning the effective class size on the performance of the students. It was also noted that urban schools were endowed with better resources and technology than their rural counterparts, hence the high level of learners' involvement and performance in EFL classrooms. On the other hand, the difficulties of rural schools were even greater due to the scant provision of resources and rather vast class sizes, which affected students' performance and attentiveness in classrooms. From these discoveries, it is possible to conclude that resources significantly help to alleviate the impacts of large class numbers on the students.

3. Discussion

This research demonstrates that smaller classes help EFL students achieve better results in their studies at schools in Libya. The study outcomes support research about class size difficulties and potentials in foreign language education. Our research explanation connects to other educational settings by examining published studies to explain our results in relation to existing knowledge.

3.1.1 Impact of Class Size on Student Achievement

The study revealed that class size has a moderate negative relationship with students' performance in writing and speaking skills. This indicates that as class size increases, student performance in these areas tends to decline. These findings align with previous research. For example**,** Krueger (1999) found that smaller class sizes in the United States led to improved academic performance. Similarly, Hattie (2008)**,** in his meta-analysis of over 800 studies,

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concluded that class size moderately influences student achievement, with smaller classes proving more beneficial.

In the context of EFL education, Andrés Bolado (2023) emphasized that smaller classes allow for a greater number of communicative tasks, which are essential for developing bilingual oral skills. This supports the current study's findings that increasing class size contributes to a decline in speaking performance.

3.1.2 Role of Student Engagement

The study showed that student engagement is a positive factor influencing achievement in writing and speaking skills. The findings of Fredricks et al. (2004) support this conclusion, as they highlighted that academic engagement plays a crucial role in academic success, particularly in language learning. Language acquisition requires active participation in tasks to develop proficiency.

Moreover, student engagement serves as a mediating factor that reduces the negative impact of large class sizes on academic achievement. As Reeve (2012) noted, actively engaged students are more likely to participate in classroom discussions, collaborate with peers, and seek help when needed—leading to better language learning outcomes.

3.1.3 Teaching Strategies and Classroom Resources

herefore, the study recommends that teaching strategies and available classroom resources play a central role in overcoming the negative effects of large class sizes. Blatchford et al. (2011) emphasized that the benefits of small class sizes are only realized when teachers are well-prepared and equipped with the necessary resources to implement interactive teaching methods. In large classes, lecturing tends to dominate, which is less effective for language learning.

However, certain teaching strategies can still enhance student learning in large EFL classrooms. For example, Chen (2021) found that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) promotes active participation, problem-solving, and collaboration among students. Such activities also support the development of fluency, even in overcrowded classrooms.

3.1.4 Teacher Experience

The study also concluded that teacher experience influenced the rate of students' achievement positively though with less measured impact compared to the other factors. Darling-Hammond (2000) stated that teachers mattered in providing better learning to the students, and he opted for experience. Thus, it might be expected that for large classes, where students' behavior is more difficult to control, the teacher who has more experience may have better control over the actions during their performance, as well as be able to convey the necessary information to the students better. Nevertheless, this study implies that although the teacher experience is valued, it can still not facilitate the teaching and learning process in large classes.

3.1.5 Implications for EFL Education in Libya

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The research results create crucial consequences for English as a foreign language education in Libya. New educational reforms should be established because research demonstrates that big classes hurt student success rates. As described in El Mezughi (2021), teachers in Libyan classrooms with many students faced difficulties in giving individualized feedback, which stands vital for language education. Teachers working with big classrooms need to prioritize environmental management, which reduces chances for interactive educational approaches.

Active student involvement demands educational methods that create opportunities for active student participation. According to Fazza and Mahgoub (2021), educators who used group activities together with pair activities and technological integration in their classrooms experienced enhanced student engagement despite having larger enrollment. The implementation of appropriate teaching methods proves that teachers can manage certain adverse consequences that stem from large class environments.

3.2 Conclusions

The research results establish comprehensive knowledge about how big class numbers influence student learning outcomes in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms across Libya. Several points emerge from the performed study analyses, which relate class size to student performance and classroom engagement and the capabilities of different teaching methods. The research findings create valuable implications that should shape educational policies in the future, both within Libya and other academic settings.

3.2.1 Class Size Negatively Affects Student Achievement

It was found that class size shows a moderate but negative correlation with student achievement in writing and speaking, respectively. The larger the class size, the lower the students' language proficiency in these areas turned out to be. This works with the body of literature on class size suggesting also that smaller classes tend to lead to higher levels of student achievement. With typical class sizes in the Libyan context hovering around 30 students, less time is afforded for personalized instruction and the active engagement of learners. These factors certainly would not help foster student performance in the country. Using these results, they stress that the problem of large classes in Libyan schools should be considered to enhance the learning outcomes of EFL.

3.2.2 Student Engagement Plays a Critical Role

Student engagement was a strong predictor of both writing and speaking achievement. It was found that the group of students who were more engaged in the classroom activities, i.e., discussing as a group and practice of language tasks, were better in both subjects. The importance of creating a learning environment where students participate is also reinforced. This result is consistent with previous research, which has repeatedly indicated the importance of engagement to academic success, particularly in terms of language learning, where active use of the language is necessary to develop communicative competence.

Decreases in engagement are more obvious in bigger classes, where there are fewer chances for human interaction. Hence, improving student engagement and promoting student interaction in the learning process is essential, particularly in large EFL classrooms in Libya.

3.2.3 Teaching Strategies Can Mitigate the Impact of Large Classes

The outcomes of the research also showed that though large classes increase difficulties in equal and quality learning, it/can be overcome by proper teaching methods. Teachers who used pedagogy, for instance, task-based learning and teaching (TBLT) and group exercises,

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experienced less difficulty in handling large groups since students would be assiduous in the teachers' instruction. In this regard, the results of this study correlate with prior studies revealing that CLT and TBA have a positive influence in large EFL contexts. Teachers in the study who adopted the old model of teaching by presenting material in front of the class had more problems in handling large classes than teachers who were able to practice individual attention. The present findings underscore the necessity to teach teachers how to use instructional communication methods in order to increase students' activity and achievements.

3.2.4 Classroom Resources Are Crucial for Success

There is evidence that classroom resources, such as the availability of technology and teaching assistants, were positively associated with student achievement. Students showed high levels of language proficiency in writing; they were in classrooms with better resources. The result coincides with Blatchford et al. (2011) finding that resources are necessary for countering the difficulties associated with large class sizes. Libya, as an example, could show that investing more in tools and technology in education would significantly improve the quality of EFL education and student outcomes since many schools have inadequate dirty rooms.

3.2.5 Teacher Experience Contributes to Classroom Management

Student success grew more from classroom size limits and better student connection than teacher time in service. Teachers who had taught for many years led classrooms more effectively and performed successful teaching practices. Past research by Darling-Hammond supports this finding by showing that teachers gain proficiency in handling classrooms effectively after teaching for many years. Teacher experience cannot fix all the difficulties that come with having many students in each class.

3.2.6 Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

From the above realization, it is possible to conclude that education in Libya has far-reaching implications for the country's policies and practices. Consequently, it becomes necessary for policymakers to explore ways of reducing class sizes in EFL classes due to the adverse effects on students 'academic performances. This would mean that, due to the strategy of implementing small classes, the teachers could be in a position to give more focused attention to learners, learners could become more participative, and there would be improvement in the performance levels of the learners.

The training of teachers means that PD should include skills and practice for effective classroom management of large classes. This paper reveals that through teacher training, which includes providing teachers with information on the use of task-based teaching and the use of technology, there is an improved chance of reducing the challenges brought about by large class sizes in teaching and creating a better teaching environment.

Last but not least, sufficient funds for the procurement of classroom resources enriched with technologies, teaching/learning aids, and the hiring of qualified assistants will enhance the quality of EFL education in Libya. Since they tend to have better resource endowment, these institutions are well-equipped to help teachers as well as students achieve better academic results outcomes.

3.2.7 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Nevertheless, we have to consider some limitations of the study concerning the effects of class size on EFL learning in Libya. The cross-sectional study design also prevents causal recommendations on subjects or interventions. In the future, more complex studies can be used with longer intervals, thereby establishing the long-term impacts of class size on achievement. Further, qualitative research may give more meaningful information about how large-class

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teachers manage students and the teaching-learning process and, from the student's perspective, their learning experiences in large classes.

Thus, further investigation is needed regarding the effects of class size in different subjects and educational settings in Libya and also in other countries that experience overcrowded class challenges.

3.3 Recommendations

1. Lower the class size in the Libyan EFL classrooms to give more individual attention and hence improve student attainment.
2. Encourage teaching methods that promote interactions and communications among the students by task-based learning so as to improve student engagement and language proficiency in large classrooms.
3. Provide funding for classroom resources used in support of teachers and students in large classes, such as technology and teaching assistants.
4. Impart teacher's professional development on methods for effective large classroom management and student engagement.
5. It promotes the integration of an active learning approach to encourage student participation and improve language learning outcomes in EFL classrooms.

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